

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PM-05
NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 OMB-01 DODE-00 AID-05 PPT-01
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FM AMEMBASSY COTONOU
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9982
INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN
AMEMBASSY ACCRA
AMEMBASSY CONAKRY
AMCONSUL IBADAN
AMEMBASSY LAGOS
AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE
AMEMBASSY LOME
AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L COTONOU 1336

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS, DM
SUBJ: GOVERNMENT CONTINUES VIGILANCE CAMPAIGN

REF: A. COTONOU 1277 B. COTONOU 1150

1. THE GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BENIN (GPRB)
IS CONTINUING ITS CAMPAIGN OF URGING BENINESE TO BE ON GUARD
AGAINSE ENEMIES OF THE REVOLUTION WITHIN AND OUTSIDE OF THE
COUNTRY. THE SEMI-OFFICIAL DAILY EHUZU HAS BEEN
CARRYING SERIES OF EDITORIALS DEMANDING IDEOLOGICAL CORRECTNESS,
DEVOTION TO THE PRINCIPLES OF THE PEOPLE'S REVOLUTIONARY PARTY
AND VIGILANCE AGAINST ANOTHER MERCENARY ATTACK ORGANIZED BY
THE FORCES OF IMPERIALISM AND REACTION. MILITARY CHECKPOINTS
HAVE BEEN ESTABLISHED AT VARIOUS POINTS ALONG THE ROAD BETWEEN
THE NIGERIAN AND TOGOLESE BORDERS, AND BORDER OFFICIALS
HAVE BECOME VERY WARY OF FOREIGNERS. THIRTY-ONE TOURISTS
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HAVE BEEN DETAINED OVER THE PAST THREE WEEKS, AND WE UNDERS-
TAND THAT MANY GHANIANS HAVE ALSO BEEN ARRESTED.

2. AT THE GOVERNMENT LEVEL IT HAS BEEN DIFFICULT TO CONDUCT
BUSINESS SINCE OFFICIALS AT EVERY POINT IN THE HIERARCHY ARE
CONTINUALLY BEING SUMMONED TO MEETINGS IN THE PRESIDENCE.
AS FAR AS WE CAN DETERMINE THESE GATHERINGS ARE REVOLUTIONARY

"PEPTALKS" TO ENSURE THAT BUREAUCRATS DO NOT LOSE THEIR
REVOLUTIONARY ZEAL. ONCE AGAIN GREAT EMPHASIS IS BEING GIVEN
TO THE NATIONAL FOOD PRODUCTION CAMPAIGN, WITH OFFICIALS
SPENDING ONE DAY A WEEK CULTIVATING THEIR ALLOTTED PLOTS.

3. COMMENT: THIS UPSURGE IN REVOLUTIONARY ACTIVITY AND
RHETORIC IS ESPECIALLY STRIKING AFTER THE PERIOD OF RELAX-
ATION IN JUNE AND JULY. WHILE WE DO NOT HAVE ANY HARD INFO, IT
APPEARS THAT THE IDEOLOGICAL CAMPAIGN MAY BE PART OF A
POWER STRUGGLE WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT ITSELF, WITH THE RADICAL
ELEMENTS (INTERIOR MIN AZONHIHO AND THE THREE CIVILIAN MEMBERS
OF THE POLICIAL BUREAU) TRYING TO REASSERT THEIR PRIMACY.
MOST OF THE BENINESE WITH WHOM WE HAVE SPOKEN FELT THAT THE
RECEPTION ACCORDED CARDINAL GANTIN (REF B) AND THE RELAXED
ATMOSPHERE REPRESENTED A VICTORY FOR THE MODERATES
IN THE GOVERNMENT (INDUSTRY MIN OUHENS, EQUIPMENT MIN RODRIGUEZ
AND FORMIN ALLADAYE -- SECOND, THIRD AND FOURTH IN THE GOV'T
HIERARCHY). THESE MINISTERS HAD BEGUN TO EXERCISE AGAIN THE
FUNCTIONS WHICH HAD BEEN ABSORBED INTO THE PRESIDENCY FOLLOWING
THE JANUARY 16, 1977 MERCENARY ATTACK, AND ONE SAW LITTLE MENTION
IN EHUZU OF INTERIOR MIN AZONHIHO OR THE RADICAL PREFECTS.
NOW THERE APPEARS TO BE AN ATTEMPT TO REVERT TO THE POST-
JAN 16 SITUATION, WITH PRESIDENT KEREKOU AND INTERIOR MIN
AZONHIHO RUNNING THE GOVERNMENT. SINCE KEREKOU HAS WHAT IS SAID
TO BE A NEARLY PARANOIC FEAR OF ASSASSINATION, IT IS POSSIBLE
THAT AZONHIHO AND THE PREFECTS HAVE PLAYED UPON THIS NERVOUS-
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NESS TO PERSUADE THE PRESIDENT TO REIMPOSE STRICT SECURITY
MEASURES. IF THIS IS INDEED THE CASE, WE CAN EXPECT TOUGH
MEASURES TO CONTINUE IN EFFECT UNTIL THE NEW CONSTITUTION IS
PROMULGATED AND THE RADICAL CIVILIANS HAVE A LEGITIMATE POWER
BASE IN THE GOVERNMENT. THOMPSON

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